

IN RE: APPEAL OF READING AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE RELATIVE TO A PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4 NORTH 2ND STREET AND 10 SOUTH 2ND STREET, CITY OF READING, BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA : **BEFORE THE ZONING HEARING BOARD OF THE CITY OF READING, PENNSYLVANIA**
: **APPEAL NO. 2021-31**
: **VARIANCE, INTERPRETATION AND/OR SPECIAL EXCEPTION**

DECISION OF THE ZONING HEARING BOARD OF THE CITY OF READING

AND NOW, this 8th day of December 2021, a hearing having been held on November 17, 2021, upon the application of Reading Area Community College, notice of such hearing having first been sent and advertised in accordance with the provisions of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code and the City of Reading Zoning Ordinance, as amended, the Zoning Hearing Board of the City of Reading (hereinafter referred to as the “Zoning Board”) renders the following decision:

FINDINGS OF FACT

The Zoning Board finds the following facts:

1. The Applicant is Reading Area Community College with a principal business address of 10 South 2nd Street, City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania 19602 (hereinafter referred to as the “Applicant”).
2. Applicant is the fee simple owner of real property located at 4 North 2nd Street and 10 South 2nd Street, City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania (hereinafter referred to as the “Subject Property”).
3. The Subject Property is located in the Commercial Core (C-C) Zoning District as well as the Institutional (INS) Overlay District and the Riverfront Redevelopment (RRO) Overlay District as those terms and districts are defined by the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Reading, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the “Zoning Ordinance”).
4. Applicant seeks a special exception and/or variance to permit certain exterior signs and related site improvements on the Subject Property.

5. Applicant is seeking zoning relief and/or approval of the prevailing provisions specified under Sections 600-1702, 600-1705, 600-1714, 600-1716, and 600-1725 of the Zoning Ordinance.

6. Applicant is proposing the following signs and/or site conditions:

- a. Improvements to develop a gateway to the college, including vehicle and pedestrian signage, improved walkway, stairs and planter boxes at the southeast corner of 2nd and Penn Streets;
- b. Installation of illuminated channel-letter signage and non-illuminated cast-metal lettering on the east and west facades and entry canopy of the Schmidt Training and Technology Center;
- c. Pylon A: installation of masonry pylon with cast-metal non-illuminated lettering, including a digital LED message center display capable of moving images, in the grass area along North 2nd Street adjacent to the Miller Center;
- d. Pylon B: installation of masonry and composite metal pylon with illuminated push-thru lettering, including a digital LED message center display capable of moving images, in concrete/grass at northwest corner of 2nd and Penn Street; and
- e. Installation of low masonry landscape walls with decorative fencing and cast-metal, non-illuminated lettering, including composite metal pylon with illuminated push-thru lettering on two sides and illuminated acrylic band at top, at the southeast corner of Front and Court Streets.

7. Applicant presented testimony the proposed location of the signs will not impede any vehicular site distance and will not be a detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood, the zoning district, or the City of Reading in general.

8. There were no objections to the proposed sign and/or the requested variance.

DISCUSSION

Applicant seeks a special exception and/or variance to permit certain exterior signs and related site improvements on the Subject Property. The Zoning Board finds the proposed use in keeping with the spirit and intent of the Zoning Ordinance and will not be detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood or the zoning district.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Applicant is Reading Area Community College.
2. The Subject Property is located at 4 North 2nd Street and 10 South 2nd Street, City of Reading, Berks County, Pennsylvania.
3. The Subject Property is located in the Commercial Core (C-C) Zoning District.
4. Applicant seeks a special exception and/or variance to permit certain exterior signs and related site improvements on the Subject Property.
5. The Zoning Board is permitted to grant applications for variances and/or special exceptions and to interpret the Zoning Ordinance.
6. In order to grant the requested relief and variance, Applicant must show it has satisfied the relevant sections of the Zoning Ordinance.
7. After reviewing the Applicant's request in detail, the Zoning Board enters the following decision:
 - a. Applicant is granted all variances requested for the five (5) requested locations.
 - b. Applicant shall comply with all pertinent provisions for illumination signs as specified by the Zoning Ordinance.
 - c. The Annexation Plan that will combine the two (2) parcels of land shall be revised, endorsed and recorded in accordance with the provisions specified by the City of Reading and the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code.
 - d. The architectural plans, rendering, elevations and signage schematics shall be revised to reflect the decision rendered by the Zoning Board.
 - e. The required building and zoning permits shall be prepared and submitted to the City of Reading in order to address all sign requirements.
 - f. The signs shall comply with all fire, safety and accessibility requirements specified by the City of Reading prior to occupancy.

g. Applicant shall comply with all relevant building codes and ordinances as well as the plans and testimony submitted before the Zoning Board.

h. Applicant may not use, expand, alter or otherwise use the Subject Property inconsistent with the contents of this Decision without making application requesting further relief from the Zoning Board.

i. Failure to comply with any of these conditions shall mean the immediate revocation of the relief granted herein.

The decision of this Board is by a vote of 4 to 0.

**ZONING HEARING BOARD OF THE CITY OF
READING**

/s/ Philip Rabena

PHILIP RABENA, CHAIRMAN

/s/ Thomas Fox

THOMAS FOX

/s/ Jeffrey Gattone

JEFFREY GATTONE

/s/ William Harst

WILLIAM HARST